An Outline of the Proposed Synopsis

Curriculum as Ideology: A Study of High School English Language Textbooks in the Selected States in India

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INTRODUCTION:

The term curriculum has been derived from the Latin word 'Currere' which means a 'race cource' or a runway on which one runs to reach a goal. It is a tool to mould the students according to one's aims and objectives. The aims and objectives are reflected in the curriculum. It is determined by the aim of society which is the subject to constant change, as per the need. Similarly, in an educational context curriculum means a kind of set program in which students are made to follow and achieve their expected goals, ideas, and aspirations of life. However, who decides the goals, ideas, and meaning? Whose goals and ideas are these? Do really students decide the future of their life? Certainly, the answer is not. It is the government that sets the curriculum according to the need of the society and such programs are set and run through the curriculum to train the students to be consumed by the need of the society.

The debate over the content and format of school textbooks are sites of educational and political conflict. Education is an integral part of society and it cannot be separated from the society, however, it is the social need of particular age. For Louis Althusser, education is the '*ideological state apparatus'* that serve to transmit culture, values, beliefs and other practices in order to control the society. Education cannot be isolated from the culture, politics, economy and history of society. Schools and curriculum plays certain role of ideology in order to control others. Many sociologists of different disciplines have contributed to the development of ideological perspectives in educational institutes and the curriculum.

Michael Apple, who is an American educational theorist specialized in education and power, cultural politics, curriculum theory and research, critical teaching and the development of democratic schools, argues that *"There is probably little doubt that the public schools are a choice transmission belt for the traditional rather than the innovative, much less the radical. As a result, they facilitate the political socialization of the mainstream young and tend to equip them with the tools necessary for the particular roles*

they are expected to play in a given society. One may wish to quarrel with the differential roles the government and the schools assign to student, but it would probably be considerably more difficult to deny the schools effectiveness". The curriculum is ideological in nature, and capitalism has deeply influenced the school curriculum that transfers a certain set of ideologies into society.

Schools and curricula reproduce the existing inequality in the society. Schools have possessed the cultural capital of the dominant class and that is transformed through the curriculum and the textbooks. Education and school curriculum is considered as a dynamic tool of transformation that is used to perpetuate, produce, reproduce and control the existing unequal status of the society. It plays an important role in the transmission and communications of ideology.

Children spend much of their time in school, and there, they learn many things about life; school is a leading platform of socialization. Schools, textbooks, pedagogy and the entire curriculum are influenced by ideology. And one's perspective is based on what s/he learns at school, however, it is believed that school curriculum is the main carrier of ideology. It is necessary to comprehend the relationship between ideology and curriculum to conceptualize ideology.

Ideology is the set of ideas, beliefs, culture, values, and practices that are shared among society. One's ideology is based on his or her own history, culture, background and economy. We are part of society and can never be isolated from it; we think as a social group. We think the way we perceive the world, and that is based on our own experiences. Each social group has its own set of ideologies different from others, one looks at the world in a certain perspective unlike the other.

It is considered that all the ideologies are not the same. In fact, they are different in nature. Some ideologies are powerful, while others are 'less-powered.' It can be argued that the dominant ideology exploits other ideologies culturally, linguistically, socio-economically,

and politically. The dominant ideology exercises power and exploits others, in order to safeguard its superiority in the given society.

However, the 'less-powered' ideologies constantly struggle to counter dominant ideology. These conflicting ideologies struggle to produce, reproduce, survive and retain power, and therefore, these ideologies simply assert different strategies to influence others. School textbooks and curricula are the right tools to transmit, spread and influence others. Because education, schools, and textbooks are considered as a neutral highest knowledge form and are used as the way of liberation, it is a terrain on which the ruling class achieves hegemony.

The foundation of English education in India has been laid down by a British scholar Thomas Babington Macaulay through his '*Minute on Indian Education'* in 1835, and this was the actual beginning of the English language and literature in India. There has been an intention behind the introduction of the English language and literature. This was the political, cultural, and economic colonialism in India. Certain kinds of ideologies have been circulated among the Indians through education in order to control our society; consequently, they succeeded in taking control over India.

Various kinds of committees such as 'Radhakrishnan Committee' (1949) and 'The Kothari Commission' (1964) were set in order to shape education and achieve the set goals. Along with many educational policies, many curriculum frameworks have also been implemented to train the young minds of the country. Therefore, education, textbook, curriculum, gender, and history have become the most crucial means of articulating national identity.

The curriculum framework has been created based on gender, religion, nationalism, and history to establish the nation in a stereotypical way in order to subjugate the young of the country. After independence, India has constantly utilized the education system at large and textbooks and curriculum, in particular, to enable the program of national construction. In many instances, education has been seen as a crucial element to shape, create, and reproduce the national culture and existing unequal system of society.

In the initial two decades of the 21st century, it is visible that education and curriculum are fully influenced by political ideologies. In 2005, the 'National Curriculum Framework' was declared to meet the set desires. Certain goals have been set and implemented through the curriculum framework. The textbook and syllabus were designed as per the requirement. If we analyze the school-level English language textbooks and curriculum after the National Curriculum Framework 2005, is clear crystal image can be seen. It is notable to see that the English language textbooks are fully loaded with different ideologies to transform the young generation and help them with the necessary convictions and ability to refashion society according to ideological tenets.

For example, the 10th class English language textbook published by the NCERT for the CBSE curriculum starts with the lesson '*A Letter to God.'* This signifies something a kind of certain religious idea or identity. The elements of religious faith, morality, obedience, and tolerance are the key discourse that is supposed to transform into society. Something illusionary concept of god and great power has been inserted through the curriculum into the mind of students. The Gujarat State Board 8th standard English second language textbook has a lesson '*Songs of Song*' in which there is a singer whose name is Sant Haridas who is a master in Indian Classic songs. It has also been mentioned that Sant Haridas devoted himself to 'Lord Krishna' (Hindu god) who lived at the bank of Yamuna. The signs of Lord Krishna and the river Yamuna (Holy River in India) are symbolism of the Hindu religion. This is why the English language textbooks and curriculums are fully loaded with certain religious identical ideologies which can be seen in the textbooks.

Maharashtra State Board English language textbook of 10th standard begins with lesson *'A Teenager's Prayer'* in which gendered ideology can be located. The poem tells us that the girl who is a teenager is supposed to be sexually controlled. This is the process of controlling the sexuality of women through education. Similarly, In the Kerala State Boards English reader, the 10th standard part-II has a lesson *'Mother to Son'* talks about being a mother or woman the life is not easy for her or them. She has to suffer a lot, at the same that women urge his boy to be a successful person in life. This is the indication of

that for females; life is not easy; they have to face various problems in society. A boy (Male) is supposed to be earning person and the owner of wealth. These are the elements of gender constructions that can be seen in the syllabus of English language textbooks of the various state boards.

Again the 10th class English language textbook published by the NCERT for the CBSE curriculum has a lesson *'Glimpses of India'* and The Assam State Board 6th class English Language textbook has a lesson entitled *'I love my India'*. Both the lessons explain India as a nation. It creates a sense of nationalism and make the students feel proud of being Indian. It doesn't suit the diversity of India and as a great thing. Assam State Board 6th class English Language textbook has a poem called '*My Land',* which means India a great country and one should be a patriot with it. In short, it is the process of constructing a nation in a stereotypical way.

Thus, the present research will examine the ideology of gender, religion, history, and nationalism that are embedded in the state board school level English language textbook curriculum and transformed into the society through the children to structure the society accordingly. These Ideologies of upper class and caste are dominant and exploit the rest of society. The National Education Policies, National Curriculum Framework, and the documents released by various educational committees are set to implement these ideologies in the English curriculum. The present research will critically assess the contents of the English textbook curriculum to expose the hidden discursive ideology, which successfully has created a stereotypical society through education and that is based on exploitation and inequality. The research will also analyze the educational policies and National Curriculum Framework in order to expose their discourse.

Research Problem:

The present research argues that English textbooks are ideologically constructed and textbook contents are manufactured by powerful groups according to their ideological vision. Particularly, the school-level English textbooks are constructed in a stereotypical

way to embed nationalism, gender, religion, and history in the psyche of students. These ideologies are manufactured and circulated among society through textbooks, and therefore, these textbooks are crucial for the production and reproduction of ideology.

Research Methodology:

Historical, analytical, and descriptive methods will be used for the present research. English Language textbooks of State Boards will be critically examined. Government reports and education policies, newspapers, journals, libraries, documents, archives, and children's magazines will be used to compile the basic data for the research. The present research work will be entirely based on the textual analysis of primary and secondary sources. The primary sources will be the state board's English language textbooks.

Hypothesis:

English language textbooks are not ideologically free rather they are loaded with ideologies. There is a relationship between curriculum and ideology. School textbooks transform ideologies such as nationalism, gender, religion, and history. Schools and textbooks are the main agencies to transform dominant culture. The curriculum plays a role in the transformation and reproduction of culture and hegemony.

Aims & Objectives:

The present research is aims to critical analyses of discourse and content of English language textbook in the context of gender, nationalism, religion and history. It also wants to examine the relationship between ideology and English language textbook contents. Further, to co-relate the ideology to the school curriculum. The main purpose of the research is to understand the nature of knowledge that is controlled and influenced by the ideology. In addition, it will try to locate the various ideologies in English language

textbook that promotes religious welfare against the minority. Educational policies and curriculum frameworks will be examined. Understanding the meaning of ideology concerning to the school curriculum.

Limitation of the Study:

The present research work will study the high school level English language textbook curriculum from 2005 to the present. The present research work will only study Kerala, Gujrat, Assam, and Uttar Pradesh state board's English Language textbook and curriculums.

Significance of the study:

School curriculum cannot be seen as a politically neutral, rather it is full of ideologies and used to transform or construct the younger mind of the students in the stereotypical way to achieve the set desires. School curriculum is not neutral; however, it manipulates people through knowledge. Educational institutions are the main agencies to transform dominant culture, ideas, and practices to exploit them. Curriculum plays the role of ideology to shape the minds of the students, and consequently, nationalism, gender, religion, and history of the dominant class are naturalized among the society. And the present study helps to decode the discourse behind the curriculum which is mainly responsible to create inequality in society.

Review of Literature:

"Ideology and Curriculum" is a crucial book by Michael Apple, wherein he discusses bout the relationship between ideology and curriculum. Apple argues the knowledge we learn at school is not the knowledge of our own.

"This Gift of English: Education and the Formation of Alternative hegemony in India" is a seminal book written by Alok Mukherjee. It gives an outline of the location of English in India's colonial history. The rulers, administrators, educators, and missionaries were motivated by the aims of creating an English-educated bureaucracy that will serve them.

They legitimized English education as a project that had lasting benefits for Indian Education and to Indian society.

“Ideology, Pedagogy, and Curricular Identity: An analysis of School Level English textbooks is a Doctoral Research” by Shalini Advani submitted at JNU. This thesis talks about Ideology and the structure of the school curriculum for English in postcolonial India. It also provides critical analyses of how education is shaped by relationship of power examining state-produced textbooks within the context of educational policies in general and the English Language policy in particular.

“Ideology in English Textbooks: A Case Study of Metric Level Books in Punjab” is a research paper published by Sayed Kazim Shah. The research article discusses that school textbooks are socially constructed. Ideologies are produced and shared among particular social groups and textbooks are tools in the production of ideologies.

‘Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India’ is a book written by Gauri Vishwanathan which provides information about how English Studies introduced in India under British rule came to be an effective form of political control abetting voluntarily cultural assimilation.

“National Curriculum Framework for School Education” (2000) is a government report published by NCERT. The report provides detailed information about the school curriculum that must be included and nurture a sense of pride in being Indian through the conscious understanding of the growth of Indian civilization and also contributing of India to the world civilization in thoughts and deeds. It will strengthen national identity and unity.

Tentative Chapter Scheme

Chapter I: Introduction

The first chapter of the present work will be entitled ‘**Introduction**.’ It will critically discuss the ideas of school curriculum, ideology, culture, religion, identity, history, nation,

and nationalism in the State Boards and the CBSC~~'s~~ Curriculum. The chapter, as an introduction, will provide an overview of the work that going to carried out in the chosen field. In the introduction, the researcher will further discuss the theoretical perspective laid down by the educationists and theorists.

In short, the first chapter will make a foundation for the present research work. It will briefly deal with several terms and concepts available in the field.

Chapter II: Constructing the Nation

The second chapter of the present research work will be entitled '**Constructing the Nation'** in the school curriculum. In the present chapter, will discuss the concepts like 'nation' and 'nationalism' in the context of the selected state boards' curricula. Further, it will also look at how it influences school curriculum in order to create a stereotypical image of ~~the~~ nation. Patriotism, pride for ~~the~~ nation, and different kind of duties for nation are being incorporated in the English language school curriculum.

It will also highlight construction of the nation in school curriculum with the help of the selected primary sources. The primary and secondary sources will be examined and analyzed to comprehensive findings.

Chapter III: Gender in Curriculum

The third chapter of the present research work will be entitled '**Gender in Curriculum.'** In the present chapter, the concept of 'gender' as social construction will thoroughly be discussed. It will also provide information about how such gendered practices are structured, normalized, and taught to innocent minds. The present chapter will also look at the linguistic discourse of gender in the curriculum.

Chapter IV: Religion and ideology

The fourth chapter of the present research work will be entitled '**Religion and Ideology.'** This chapter will analyze how religion and similar ideology are deliberately highlighted or

given preference in the English language textbook in order of certain religion to create a certain collective consciousness among the society, consequently to control the whole. The present chapter will provide detailed information about the interplay and their consequences in political, social-economic contexts. In this chapter, the researcher will also take a look at the use of religious and ideological content in the English language curriculum.

Chapter V: History, Identity, and Politics in Curriculum

The fifth chapter of the present research work will be entitled '**History, Identity, and Politics in Curriculum.** In this chapter, the identical history and its politics in the curriculum will be discussed. It will give information about how history is deliberately written, altered, and included in the school-level English textbook to shape the society through the curriculum for certain political, economic, and social benefits.

Chapter VI: Conclusion

The sixth chapter of the present research work will be entitled '**Conclusion.'** In the present research chapter, the researcher will provide the major findings of the research work. It will also summarize the critical aspects of the school-level textbook and curriculum. It will also state the relationship of gender, nationalism, religion, and history with reference to English language textbooks and curriculum. It will particularly pave the way for further research in the related area and the limitations of the present research. It will certainly provide pedagogical inputs.

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